

Education and Workforce Development Cabinet Office for the Blind to hold assistive technology expo in September

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Contact Information:

Inaugural expo and conference is open to the public and free of charge

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Aug. 29, 2012) – The Kentucky Office for the Blind (OFB) is hosting its first assistive technology expo and conference Sept. 18 - 19 at the Galt House in Louisville. The conference, themed “2012 Odyssey - A New Vision,” is designed to increase knowledge and provide current information on assistive technology for the blind and visually impaired. The deadline to register is Sept. 7.

“This is a wonderful opportunity for people to experience the many assistive technology devices that are available to help people who are blind, visually impaired or deaf and blind become independent or retain their independence at home, work and in the community,” said Allison Flanagan, OFB acting director. “The presenters and breakout sessions offer a variety of information and insight into the advances in adaptive technology and how technology can improve someone’s quality of life.”

The conference will feature nationally-known speaker and writer Michal Hingson, the New York Times best-selling author of “Thunder Dog.” Hingson’s life changed dramatically on Sept. 11, 2001, when he and his guide dog Roselle escaped from the 78th floor of Tower One in the World Trade Center moments before it collapsed. Soon after, Hingson and Roselle were thrust into the international limelight where he began to share his unique story and lessons of trust, courage, heroism and teamwork.

Hingson has been involved in developing and selling assistive technology for more than 35 years. He directed operations in a project to help create the Kurzweil Reading Machine for the blind, the first omnifont OCR device which read print to blind persons.

Other presenters at the conference include Anindya (Bapin) Bhattachary, technology development and training specialist at the Helen Keller National Center; Beth Loy, a principal consultant with the Job Accommodation Network; and Jennifer Genderman, an occupational therapist at the Kentucky Lions Eye Center. In addition, there will be breakout sessions on a variety of topics.

The conference, open to the public and free of charge, is federally funded by the U.S. Department of Education Rehabilitation Services Administration. It is geared toward individuals who are blind, visually impaired and deaf/blind, family members, teachers, employers and assistive technology staff. The expo will provide individuals the opportunity to view a wide range of low- and high-tech adaptive products.

For more information, contact Cora McNabb at (502) 564-4754 or cora.mcnabb@ky.gov. Additional information may be found on the OFB website at <http://blind.ky.gov>.

OFB, an agency in the Department of Workforce Investment, provides job counseling, education, job training and assistive technology services to Kentuckians who are blind and visually impaired so that they can have opportunities for employment and independence.